

The Americans
— and Canada

In 1837-38

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Authentic Documents

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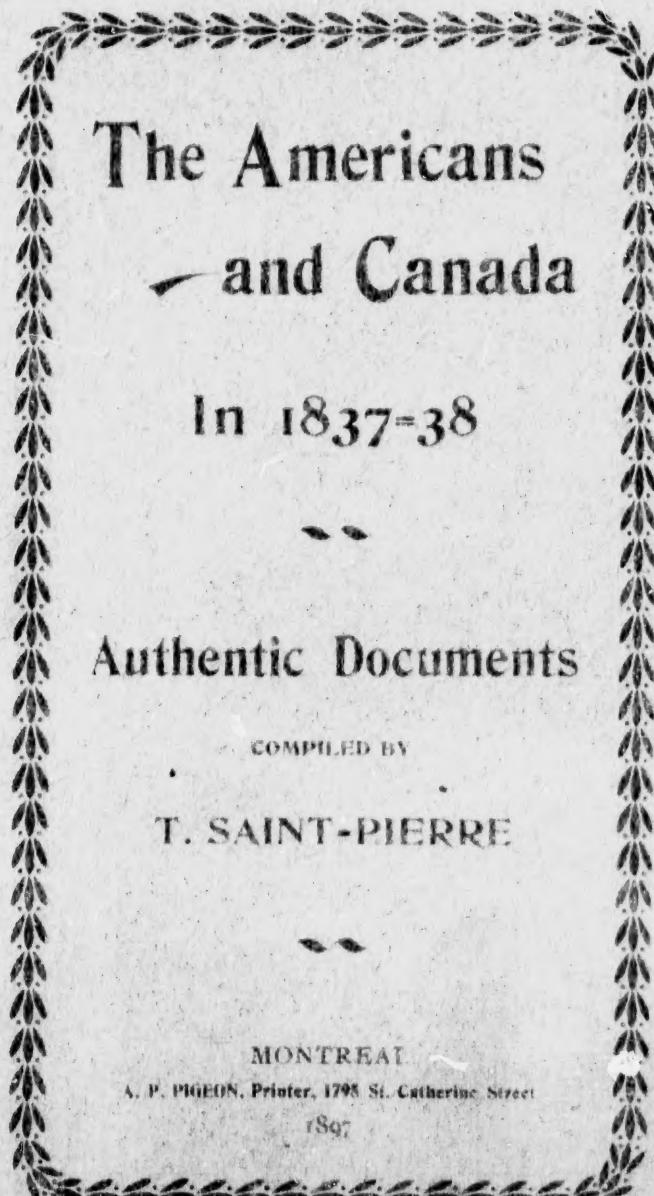
T. SAINT-PIERRE

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MONTREAL

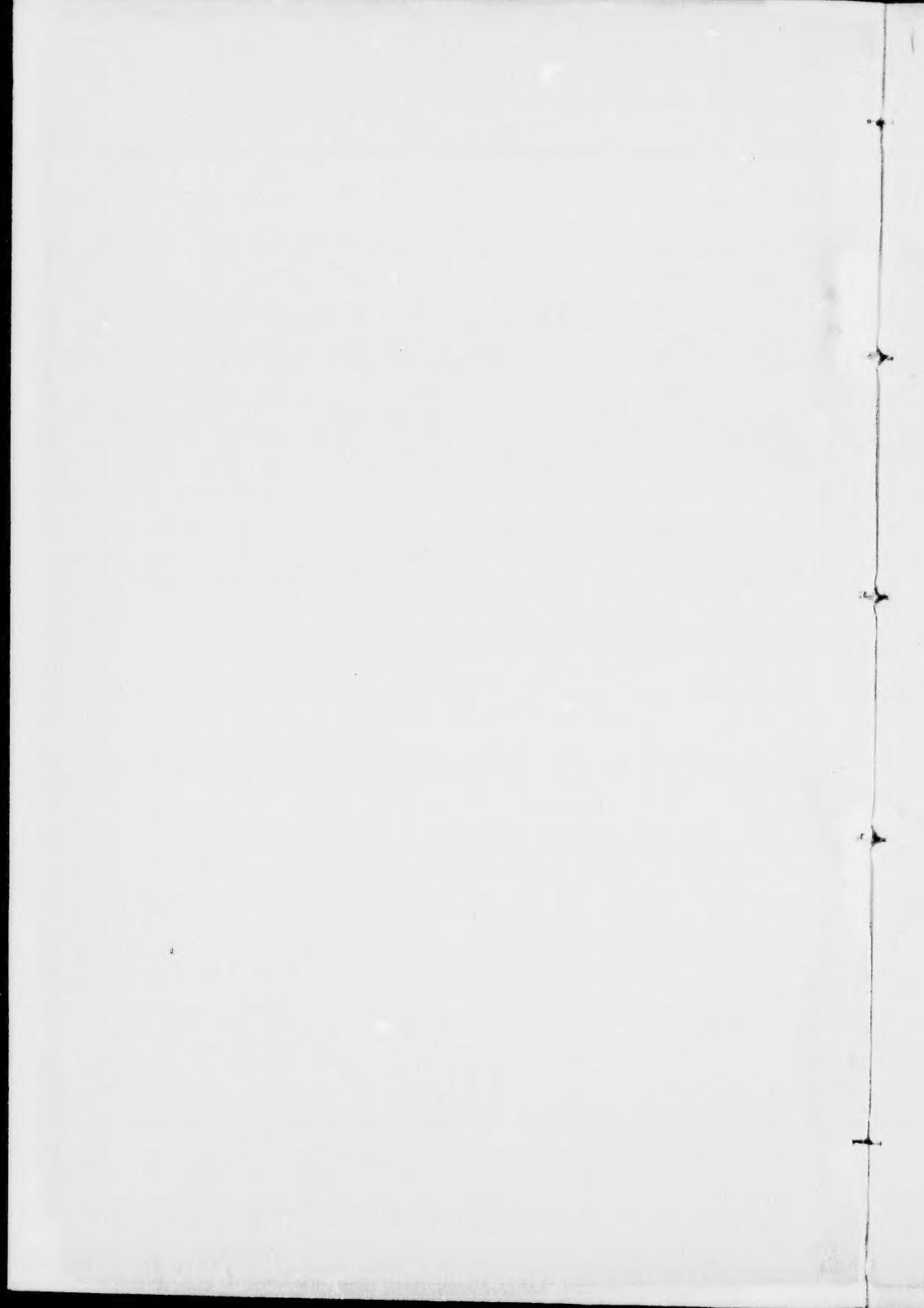
A. P. PIGEON, Printer, 1795 St. Catherine Street

1897









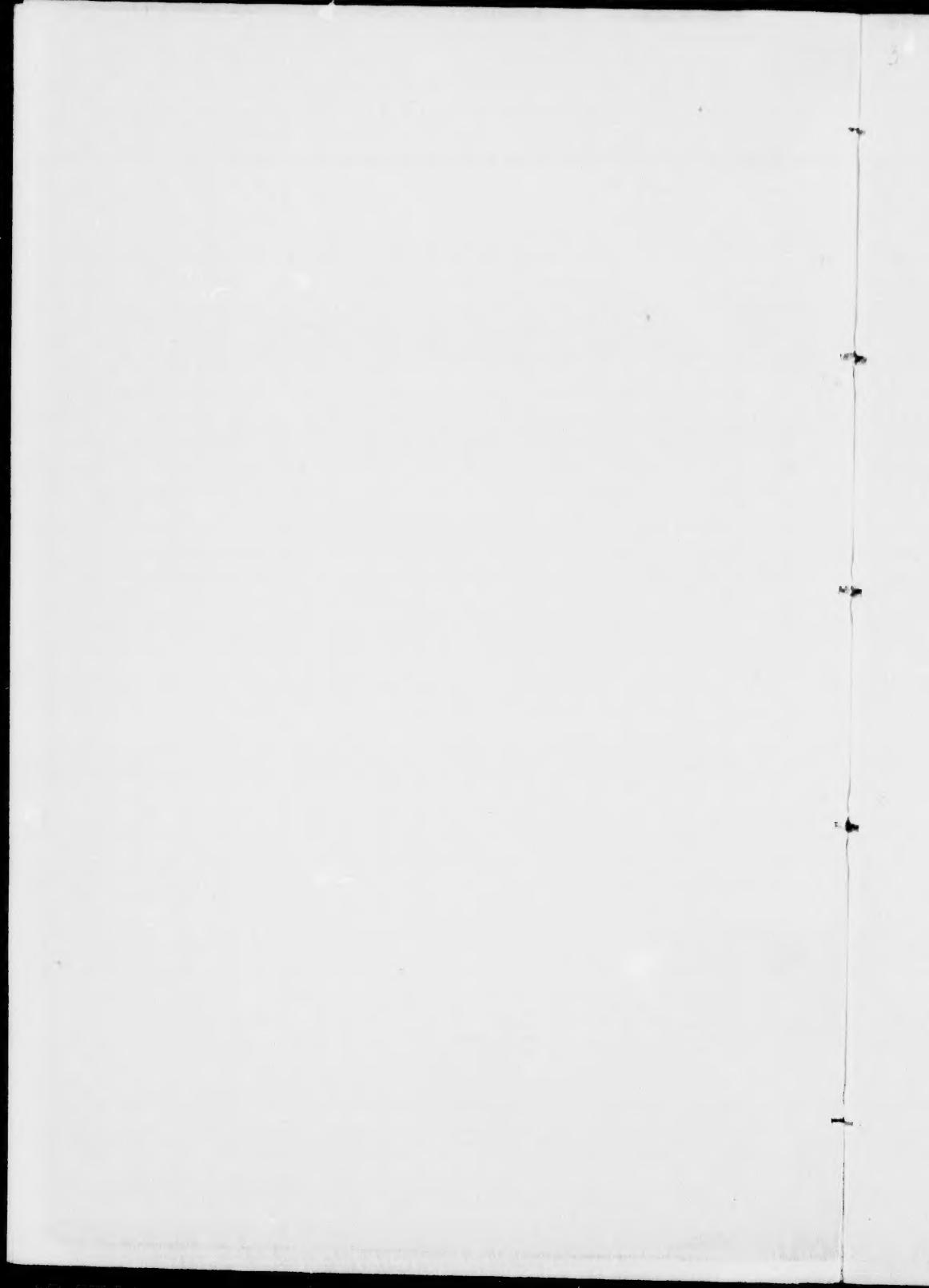
Respectfully dedicated

to

His Worship R. Wilson-Smith, Esq.,

Mayor of Montreal,

*As a slight token of
appreciation of his worth as a public
servant and a citizen.*



The Americans — and Canada

In 1837-38



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T. SAINT-PIERRE



MONTREAL

A. P. PIGEON, Printer, 1798 St. Catherine Street

1897

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PREFACE

Sixty years have now elapsed since the uprising of 1837-38. The impression now generally prevails that American public opinion was very sympathetic to the rebels, and that the leaders of the revolt could have hoped for support against England from the United States government had they been better organized. The perusal of the following pages will show that the impression is wrong. In 1837 as in more recent times there was in the United States a certain class of jingoes who loudly proclaimed their desire to help the oppressed, but the mass

of the people as well as the authorities were averse to provoking a serious conflict with a powerful nation. The United States Government might have condonced to accept Canada if the patriots had delivered it over to them, but they were not willing to fight for it. Even the burning of the "Caroline" on American territory did not provoke any vehement protest from the rulers of the Republic. The lesson appears clear that Canadians must rely upon themselves alone to fight their battles, which they have shown themselves quite capable of doing. However, the following documents, selected with absolute impartiality, speak for themselves.



Address of the Sons of
Liberty of Montreal,
November, 1837.

To the Young Men of North America:

Brothers—When urgent circumstances in the affairs of a country make it necessary for them to form themselves into parties or association, a proper respect for the opinions of society demands from them an explicit declaration of the causes which have induced them to combine, and of the principles which they intend to advance, by the power of their organization.

We consider that, next to the privilege of acting for himself, man possesses, from the very foundation of society, that of uniting his energies with those of his fellow-citizens for all purposes of mutual interference or defence; and that, therefore, the right of association is as sacred and inalienable as the right of personal liberty. We hold that Governments are

instituted for the benefit, and can only exist justly by the consent of the governed, and whatever may be the artificial changes in human affairs, that a government of choice is an inherent right of the people. It cannot be alienated, and consequently can always be asserted and exercised. Our Government being instituted for the benefit of a whole people and not for the honor or profit of any individual, all pretences of Divine or absolute authority claimed by or for any family are rejected.

(Signed.)

Andre Ouimet, President.

J. S. Beaudry.

J. Martel, Vice-President.

J. G. Beaudrion, Treasurer.

G. H. C. Therien, Recording Sec'y.

C. Boucherville, Corresponding Sec'y.

Francois Tavernier.

Amable Simard.

And thirty-five other members.

Messrs. Ouimet, Boucherville, Tavernier and Simard were arrested for having signed this address, the publication of which started a serious discussion in the American press.

The following are typical extracts:—

(From the Buffalo Journal, November 19, 1837.)

Indeed, we know not how it could be otherwise, than that the friends of rational freedom in the United States, without bearing here the appellation of Whig or Tory could feel otherwise than deeply interested in the success of a party in Canada, contending upon like principles. As yet, no one in the United States has considered the movement in Canada as calling for more than an expression of good will on the part of the press or the people. The indications, now are, however, especially in the lower Province—that the matters are about coming to a crisis—that the Government, in the spirit of depotism is about attempting to still the voice of just complaint and remonstrance by the strong hand, as it was once attempted in these colonies of Great Britain. Let but the agents of the transatlantic power proceed to the extremities which they threaten, by these arrests for high treason, and the opponents of governmental op-

pression in the Canadas will soon learn the light in which their brethren in the northern section of this union regard them. Although they may have been silent observers of their efforts to keep alive the fires of liberty upon her altars in the Canadas, they have not been unthinking or unfeeling ones.

(From the New York Express, November 15, 1837.)

"We intreat the Whig press of this country to look intelligently at the great events now going on in Canada. In this country we have justly had great fears of revolutionizing agrarian movements, and on this account many of our presses have discouraged all the struggles for liberty in Canada. Beware of extremes. The Whigs, the world over, have two enemies to contend with, one Toryism and the other agrarianism. In the United States the two extremes coalesced for the purpose of routing the great Middle interest, which is Whig. Tory Executive form combines in this country with the Fanny Wrights, the Loco-Focos and the Slam Bangs in order to break down the Whig party, and Whig prin-

ciples. This Toryism in Canada is now perpetrating, with the British army to back it, great oppression upon the Canadian people. It keeps away from them the right of all freemen to a proper representation. It puts down all popular movements. The bayonet is the answer to an argument. It is very true that the Whigs of Canada, desperately driven, may now and then rush to extremes. It is always the case in all popular outbreaks. But these Whigs are right in their principles. They are simply contending for what the Whigs of the Revolution contended for in '76. If our forefathers were right, these Canadian Whigs are right. Our American editors must not take as all law and gospel, the statements of the English papers in Canada. The French newspapers have just as much and we think, a little more of truth in them. The Vindicator, which was printed in English, the Tories of Canada have torn down. It may be that it was part of their policy to prevent its circulation among English readers of liberal principles.

Once more, Papineau is spoken of very freely by some American editors. Papineau is a very able, and highly intellectual man. He would make a figure among the first men in the United States. He has taken the same stand in Canada that John Adams took in Massachu-

sets, and Patrick Henry in Virginia. He is not to be classed with the vulgar demagogues of the day, and whatever may be our estimate of his opinions, he deserves well of us as a man.

To the Whigs of Canada—we address you thus because we have no other manner of reaching you, and we call you Whigs because, though a Whig Government in England is your apparent oppressor, yet Tory principles are the cause of the oppression—we say beware of extremes in all your creeds. This great country, the moment it has time to turn from the fearful struggles we have had here with Jacobinism, will do you justice. Study the principles, the life and character of George Washington as your model. Look over the lives of the Adamses, the Madisons, the Otises, the Henrys and Hamiltons of the American Revolution. None of them are Jacobins. They were Whigs. The Declaration of Independence embodies all you should contend for at present. Learn questions of political economy. Finance, aye, all questions of the pocket, leave to a calmer day. Cry out against a standing army, which shoots you down. Denounce the force that knocks you down. Insist upon the right of full, ample representation. Be moderate, but stern, and remember that truth is powerful and will prevail."

(From Detroit Daily Advertiser, November, 1837.)

SIGNS OF THE TIMES. — Recent movements in Canada demonstrate the rapidity with which our neighbors are rushing into revolution. The history of these movements from time to time showing that affairs have evidently reached a *crisis*, will be positively interesting to our readers. The same spirit of determined opposition to tyranny, which involved our own colonies in war, is now manifested in the stirring resolutions which are echoed and defiantly responded to throughout the Provinces. The immediate effect of a declaration of independence by the Canadas upon the people of this country would be, judging from past indications, to enlist in their behalf an almost universal sympathy. The remote consequences we do not pretend to be intimate with. It is enough to know that the great political changes that will before long convulse to the centre that powerful colony cannot, from its contiguity to us, but materially influence our own destinies, whether for better or for worse we will not pretend to say."

(From the New York Evening Star, November 22, 1837).

"We have not been able to see evidence of the sympathy felt for the Canadians, and for the simple reason that the Canadians have no cause of complaint against the Government. That they may desire to be free and independent, to have a separate government of their own, and to be their own masters, is quite reasonable and natural, and they must take the responsibility of the attempt on their own shoulders; but the causes of separation and revolt must not be set down to the acts of the Mother Country. Let them, if they see fit, endeavor to be their own masters. That is their lookout; but do not let us of this country sympathize in their struggles on the ground of harsh treatment. We know to the contrary. We, the poor people of the United States, ostensibly free, are now suffering more from the despotism of our own Government, than the Canadians are from their own. We hazard no opinion of the ultimate success of this struggle, and we only hope that we shall not depart from our neutrality in this contest, or have our Government compromised by any act or measure which may sustain or aid this family quarrel."

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(From the New York American, November 30, 1837.)

"We cannot think there is any deep root to this revolt, for there has been no such intolerable oppression of the Canadians as either to justify civil war or render it enduring under disaster."

(From the New York Albion, December 2, 1837.)

"The oppressed party is the English party; the French-Canadians, from numerical force, have for many years kept them in a stationary position, opposed all improvements, and enacted laws fatal to their interest."

(From the Detroit Advertiser, November 30, 1837.)

"The crisis in the affairs of our sister provinces has arrived. The blow has been struck. The struggle for liberty on the one side, and government on the other, has commenced. Blood has been shed upon the altar of freedom. What has heretofore been stigmatized as rebellion, now assumes the dignity of revolution. As Americans, sons of those who fought for and achieved independence, we cannot witness these movements without the most thrilling emotions. May the God of battles speed the right! We look for additional intelligence with intense interest. If, as we anticipate, the blow thus struck has roused the Canadians to a sense of their situation, the next papers from Montreal will bring the details of a bloody revolution."

(From Boston Atlas, November 4, 1837.)

"Public meetings, very numerously and enthusiastically attended, continue to be held, both in Lower and in Upper Canada, on the subject of Canadian rights and Canadian grievances. The Tories make great efforts to get up contradictory meetings, but they meet with very little success.

The cause of the independence and reform is every day gaining converts.

The Canadians come to the meetings with muskets on their shoulders. Military exercises are much attended to. Paragraphs like the following, from the last *Vindicator*, may serve to show that the Canadians are serious:—

“The different sections of the ‘Sons of Liberty,’ mustered in considerable strength on Sunday afternoon, at Coteau St. Louis, on the farm of the Hon. D. B. Viger, in rear of the Bishop’s Church. There could not have been less than twelve hundred effective men embodied. They were put through the different military evolutions, with much credit to themselves, considering the short time the corps has been under drill. We were glad to notice that much enthusiasm prevailed among the various corps. We, however, doubt that by a little practice, they will form a very effective and useful body.”

“The Governor of Canada dismisses from their posts, all those magistrates and officers of militia, who participate in these meetings, but the permanent and central committees, and the people generally, by the approbation which they express for the conduct of men who sacrifice office to patriotism, more than counterbalances those operations of the Governor.”

The Toronto Patriot, a loyalist organ, made a clever appeal to American prejudices by publishing the following article:

"Thus the die is cast which must decide whether the Province shall henceforth be BRITISH or FRENCH. This is the true and only question. On this point there should be no mistake.

"It is gratifying to see that at length the mettle of the executive is up, and that the jails are filling with notables."

This article was published on the 28th of November, 1837, and called forth the following rejoinder:

(From the Morning Courier and Enquirer, New York, December 7, 1837.)

We observe with regret in some of our newspapers a disposition to agitate in favor of the insurgents, and to excite a spirit of hostility against the Anglo-Canadians. As far as the present struggle is a contest for independence, it excites, of course, the sympathies of our citizens, but there is no doubt that the whole policy of our Government and our institutions suggests the observance of a strict neutrality, and the nature of our connections with Great Britain render that duty in the present instance doubly important."

(Same, December 9, 1837.)

"We understand that depositions were yesterday made in this city that agents of the insurgents in Canada, were openly recruiting in Burlington and other places in Vermont, and sending into Canada men and munitions of war, for the use of those in arms against the Government. These depositions were forwarded to England by yesterday's packet, and to the British Minister at Washington, and will doubtless be the cause of an immediate demand upon our executive to put an end to such proceedings in future. Our fellow citizens and the public press throughout the United States cannot be too cautious how they encourage or countenance any proceedings which may by any possibility embroil us with England, or which may have a tendency to weaken the bond of unity and of interest by which the two countries are now closely united."

(From the Washington National Intelligencer, December 5, 1837.)

"I have not the least doubt that they will succeed in the end. Their cause is an inspiring one, and will enlist the sympathies of all the United States border counties of Lower Canada, even to the pitch of enthusiasm. The independence of Lower Canada settles for us two great questions—the north-eastern boundary question and the free navigation of the St. Lawrence."

Buffalo seems to have been at this time the centre of agitation in favor of the Patriots. At a meeting held on the 5th December, 1837, which is said to have been attended by 1,500 persons, the following resolutions were adopted:

"Resolved. That we disclaim the charges of exciting sedition, of forwarding a civil war, or of participating in alienating the affections of the Canadians from Great Britain, but that being fully persuaded of their great grievances and privations, we deem it unlawful and commendable that when civil war is kindled, when the bonds of political society are broken, and are

considered as two distinct powers, to sympathize with that party whose cause we deem just, and it is only what justice and generosity require in the behalf of men fighting in the defence of their liberties to earnestly beseech the God of Battles to afford them such succor as they shall stand in need of in the day of their trouble.

Resolved, That although it is a well settled principle of international law, and recognized as such by the law of nations, that it is right and just and laudable to assist in every way a colony making war with the mother country (whose acts are those of injustice and serve only to keep men in a state of servitude) and that the principle is made so broad that it is the bounden duty of every nation to render such aid who can give it without being itself wanting."

At another meeting held on the 9th of December, attended by 400 persons, the following resolutions were adopted:

Resolved, That as free and independent citizens of the State of New York, we deplore the situation of our neighbors of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada.

Resolved, That the policy of the Home Government towards the colonies has been for a series of years unjust and oppressive.

Resolved, That it is with feelings of sincere regret we are compelled, by the grievances of the people through the press, to tax the Mother Country with holding in bondage upwards of a million of subjects, and subjecting them to the same degree of servitude as was experienced by the colony of Massachusetts previous to the battle of Lexington.

Resolved, That in the accession of Victoria, the youthful Queen, to the throne of England, we expected a continuance of the course of policy so gloriously commenced by the Reformers in the Imperial Parliament of 1832

Resolved, That we do not believe in the aristocratic doctrine, "that might creates right," but on the contrary, that the weak and oppressed in all countries require aid and countenance from all nations, and more especially from those who are citizens of the United States, who, in the struggle of Greece and Poland, rendered such services as are now asked from this community

Resolved, That we pledge our honor and mutual faith to aid in opposing all mea-

sues brought forward by the Home Government that has not at interest the feelings, wants and privileges of the inhabitants of the colonies.

On the 11th of December another meeting was held in Buffalo, Lyon Mackenzie having arrived there after having crossed the frontier in disguise, and having slept two nights in haystacks, according to the Commercial Advertiser, which gives the following account of the meeting:

The stage was set with appropriate scenes of the Roman Forum, a military band occupied the orchestra and played patriotic airs, while the house was filling. Ralph was not present to meet expectations, but was reported to be on his way at the top of his horse's speed. Dr. Chapin being called to the chair, stated the object of the meeting. On announcing that W. L. Mackenzie was then at his home under his protection, there was a general outburst of applause. To the question, "Will you protect him?" the answer was: "We will, we will! Bring him out!" But he was reported too ill to attend the meeting. Dr. C. then said: "I want six strong, brave young men, as

good as God has got among us, to go to my house to-night for fear of any attempt on the part of the loyalists." "A hundred!" was the explanation. "I, I, I," was heard all over the house, and numbers sprang upon the stage.

After giving three cheers for Mackenzie, Papineau, Rolph and others, the assembly marched in procession to Dr. Chapin's residence, and gave three cheers for Mr. Mackenzie and his hosts.

Editorially, the Commercial Advertiser said . . .

"All our feeling and sympathies are with the Canadians. . . . But are not proceedings such as we have recorded, honorable as they are to the hearts of those engaged in them, calculated to produce results directly opposite to what are intended? Do the gentlemen who compose the meeting feel willing, with all their responsibility resting upon them, to embark personally in the contest now going on in the Lower Provinces? We presume—we know—that they do not. . . . Is it not cruel to them to hold out hopes which may never be fulfilled? . . . We do not entertain

the opinion that there is sufficient cause for the insurrection which has broken out in the Lower Provinces, and we are compelled in candor to say, from our own knowledge and observation, that they have not only been most mildly and parentally governed, but we are well satisfied that they have neither the intelligence nor the love of liberty which renders them qualified for self-government, even if they were to establish their independence. The French population—the only portion of the people engaged in this rebellion—are but little removed from the aborigines by whom they are surrounded, and are as ignorant and as little qualified to govern themselves as were the peasantry of France during the middle ages. (The Upper Canadians) do not complain of oppression, and there is no evidence in our possession or known to the public which proves that they desire our aid in accomplishing it.

We shall conclude by urging upon all citizens—first, the necessity of reserving our sympathies for those who merit them, those who desire them, and secondly, to bear in mind that our national honor and duty to ourselves, to our country and to the civilized world, demand that we should preserve between Great Britain and her colonies a strict neutrality.

The Buffalo Journal, also ridiculed McKenzie's attempt to excite sympathy. One hundred and fifty residents of Buffalo and Black Rock took the trouble to write a card deplored the manifestations of sympathy which had been expressed in favor of Canadians, and on December 18, a correspondent wrote to the Journal:

"No American would ever lend a hand to help a Frenchman to raise the guillotine on the squares of Montreal and Quebec to shed the blood which flows in their own veins."

Nevertheless the following poem by the wife of Dr. Robert Nelson, of Montreal, then retired to Plattsburg went the round of the American press.

THE PATRIOT CHIEF.

All manacled and pale, they led him thence
that lawless throng,
Amid the din of curse, and jeer of ribaldry
and song;
But vainly did they strive to urge that
manly spirit's grief,
Though worn by famine and by fight, un-
daunted moved the Chief.

Not yet had sorrow quenched the fire of
that proud eagle-eye
He beeded not their glistening steel, he
dreaded not to die.
In virtue's fair and sunny paths unsullied
he had trod;
He fought for Freedom and for Right, his
Country and his God.

He scorned the idle pageantry of monarchy
and power;
He saw oppression's deepening clouds with
horror o'er him lower;
He tried to burst his people's chains, and
bled that they should be
Linked with the happy of the earth, the
joyous and the free.

But every effort had been crushed, each
hope had passed away;
His trusty followers had fallen in that
unequal fray
The hired miscreants had stained his once
glad home with blood,
And now a pile of ashes smoked where
that lov'd dwelling stood

And he must see no more this world, so
beautiful and fair,
With all those dear and cherished ones
that claim his fondest care;
Wife, children, all are dead to him, one
only hope hath he,
The sweet forgiveness of his Lord in bless-
ed eternity.

In Buffalo a committee had been appointed to collect subscriptions for the patriots' fund, but with what success we are not exactly informed. Public meetings were held nearly every evening during December, and at one of these Lyon Mackenzie delivered a lecture on: "Is the cause of the revolting Canadians a just cause?" The agitation spread to other towns on the frontier. In Detroit the Young Men's Debating Society took up the question of the Canadians' grievances, and invited refugees to be present and to address the meetings, and, needless to say, the report justifying resistance on the part of the colonists was finally adopted by a large majority. On December 21 a meeting of the citizens of Detroit was held in the City Hall "to consider what means could be devised to assist the suffering refugees from British oppression now in this city." The following report is from the Detroit Daily Advertiser, December 28, 1837:—

"It being represented to this meeting that the Canadians had selected a committee of six, with power to add to their number, to enter into communication with friends of Canadian liberty in Detroit, it was

"Resolved that a committee of six be appointed to act jointly with the Canadian committee, for the purpose of adopting

the most efficient means for the support of such Canadian patriots as have been driven from their homes by the present persecution in Upper Canada, and also for the purpose of providing them with arms and the munitions of war.

"The following gentlemen were thereupon appointed:—D. D. McKinney, Benj. Kingsbury, jr., Dr. E. A. Theller, John S. Bagg, John M. Wilson, Charles Peltier. The joint committee appointed Charles Peltier, Esq., treasurer.

"The following resolutions were then passed:

"Resolved, that the joint committee be requested to take into their most serious consideration the best means of promoting the cause of the patriots in the Upper and Lower Provinces."

A subscription was immediately opened and \$134 were subscribed. Ten rifles were also given.

A subsequent meeting was held in the City Hall, Detroit, on December 28, 1837, at which it was

"Resolved, That the general committee be requested to furnish a general depot for such provisions, arms and munitions of war as may be in their opinion necessary to protect the refugee patriots, who seek our protection from insult or from kidnapping agents of any country or power, and that volunteers be enrolled for their protection, peaceably and quietly, and within the pale of the laws of our country."

At Rochester meetings were held at the same time, at which resolutions were passed expressing "the deep solicitude felt in the struggle to resist oppression and secure the benefits of a representative government to the inhabitants of that country."

In Oswego there was also a committee to which McKenzie applied for arms and ammunition.

The attempts made to invade Canada at Detroit and Navy Island, and the burning of the Caroline within the American line on the night of December 29 have been chronicled in many histories. Minor incidents of the same character were frequent on the frontier.

The Albany Argus, December 28, reports the following:

"Mr. Moss, of Chassy, took a passenger from his village on Thursday last, to carry to Champlain. He reached Mr. Nichols' tavern, in Champlain village, about 2 o'clock Friday morning, awoke Mr. Nichols, and built a fire in the bar-room. Soon the bailiff enquired of Mr. Nichols if such men—Canadians of the Radical party—were there. Mr. Nichols replied that there were travellers in the house, but he did not know them. The bailiff wanted to search the house. Mr. Nichols told him he should not search. The bailiff threatened to blow out Mr. Nichols' brains. Mr. Nichols, with true Yankee spirit, dared him to fire.

The party in the house, finding that Mr. Nichols was determined at all hazards to protect his lodgers, finally left the house, joined those outside, and rode off. Let armed British subjects keep their own

side of the line; at any rate not cross it to commit outrages upon citizens of the United States. REMEMBER PLATTSBURG."

The Rochester Democrat, reporting the burning of the Caroline, said:

"In recording this horrid tragedy, we dare not give utterance to our feelings, but we must say that if this outrage be not speedily avenged—not by simpering diplomacy, either—BUT BY BLOOD, our national honor deserves the indignity it has received."

The Albany Journal, January 5, 1838, said:

"This question is assuming a more formidable character. It has already excited much feeling among us, and is likely to become one of pervading interest. The whole subject is surrounded with difficulties. The position of our State is one of great delicacy and responsibility. The public sympathy and the popular feeling

are with the patriots. These cannot be repressed. And yet our relations with England are of a character so amiable as to enforce the strictest neutrality upon us. With these views we have thus far pursued a course dictated by convictions of duty. We cannot promise, however, to remain long indifferent if the royalists continue their sanguinary mode of warfare. Defenceless villages may not be burned with impunity. Fire thus kindled will blaze higher and burn longer than the incendiaries contemplate. This is not the way for oppressors to pierce the hearts of the oppressed.

"The Government officers are pushing their advantages too far.

"The Tory press in Canada are thirsting for blood. 'The gallows,' says a Toronto paper, 'is impatient for its prey, and will speedily have carrion in abundance.' Should the Government venture to try and hang for treason, its power to wreak such vengeance will be short-lived. The moment the Royalists condemn citizens to the 'gallows' for political offences a warfare will be commenced which must terminate in the independence of Canada."

These were the utterances of the most radical opposition papers, such as the Buffalo Star and Journal, the Detroit Post, and the Burlington Free Press. The opposition papers, even those who had been friendly to the patriots, took a different view. The Albany Argus, January 4, 1838, said:

"Retaliatory measures meet with no encouragement from any quarter."

The Detroit Free Press, January 1, 1838, said:

"A direct violation of our territory has taken place, and the first feeling of every American should be to repel it, but while we thus give vent to our patriotic impulses, and exhibit a determination which belongs to a great people never to suffer an oppression upon our soil, it is due to justice and to our national character to pause and reflect upon the causes which have led to this violation of our territory, and suffer reason rather than passion to influence our opinions and actions.

"It is the duty of the Federal Government to make use of all the means in its power to compel obedience to our treaty stipulations and our national obligations."

The meek attitude of the American authorities is shown by the following correspondence:

Copy of a letter from the Hon. Allan N. McNab, Colonel commanding, to Lieut.-Col. Strachan. Copy.

Headquarters, Chippewa, 2nd Jan., 1838.

Sir,—I beg leave to report that I have just been called upon by Mr. Smith, one of the Deputy Marshals of the State of New York, and Collector of Customs for the Port of Manchester, with a letter from Henry Arcularius, Esq., Commissary General of Military Stores for the State of New York, which, with my reply, I have the honor to enclose.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your obedient humble Servt,

ALLAN N. McNAB,

Col. Com'g.

Lieutenant-Colonel Strachan,

Military Secretary.

The following are the enclosures.

No. 1.—Copy of a letter from General Arcularius, Commissary General of the State of New York, to the Hon. Col. A. N. McNab.

State of New York,

Niagara Falls, Jan. 2nd, 1838.

Colonel Allan McNab, commanding Her Majesty's forces on the Niagara frontier:

Sir,—Having just arrived in this part of the State of New York, pursuant to the Commands of the Governor of this State, (a copy of which I have the honor herewith to enclose), I would most respectfully solicit from you the suspension of an attack of the assemblage now lodged on Navy Island bordering on this frontier, until I can demand the surrender of any and all the arms, ordnance and stores belonging to the people of this State, of which this assemblage have obtained the clandestine possession; and permission to withdraw the same if they shall be given up. The application will be made immediately, and without any delay on my part, or the part of those citi

zens to whom the communication is addressed.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
With great respect, your obedient servant,

HENRY ARCULARIUS.
Com'y-Gen. Military Stores,
State of New York.

No. 2—Copy of a letter from His Excellency W. L. Marcy, Governor of the State of New York, to Gen. J. Gould, of Rochester, Judge Hunt, of Lockport, His Honor J. Trowbridge, Mayor of Buffalo, and others.

No. 2. Albany, Dec. 29th, 1837.

To General J. Gould, of Rochester, Judge Hunt, of Lockport, His Honor J. Trowbridge, Mayor of Buffalo, and others.

Gentlemen,—Permit me to introduce you respectively to the bearer hereof, General Arcularius, the Commissary-General of this State. Understanding from various persons that some of the pieces of ordnance, and other military property belonging to the State, and situated in the western part of it, have been taken from those who had the custody of them, and carried beyond our territorial limits, I have directed the Commissary General to

visit that section of the State for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of these reports, and to take proper measures to reclaim such portion of the public property as may have been taken away, and to place it in a safe condition.

I shall be much obliged to you for any aid or information that you shall have it in your power to afford him.

I have the honor to be,
With great respect, your obedient servant,

(Signed) W. L. MARCY,

No. 3—Copy of reply from the Hon. A. N. McNab to Commissary General Arcularius.

No. 3.

Headquarters, Chippewa, 2nd Jan., 1838.

Sir,—I have this moment had the honor to receive your communication of this day, in which you solicit a suspension of an attack on the assemblage now lodged on Navy Island until you can demand the surrender of any and all the arms, ordnance and ordnance stores belonging to the people of the State of New York, of which the assemblage have obtained the clandestine possession, with permission to withdraw the same if they shall be given

up, and assuring me that the above application will be made immediately and without any delay on your part, or on the part of those citizens to whom the communication is addressed.

As the above application evinces a noble desire on the part of the State of New York sincerely to co-operate with the Government of Her Britannic Majesty in maintaining the laws of nations against the atrocious attack of a band of pirates who have equally insulted the American as well as the British authorities, by plundering their property, and by openly setting their laws at defiance. I lose no time in assuring you, that having been directed cordially to co-operate with the authorities as well as with the citizens of the United States in maintaining the treaty which happily exists between them and the British Empire, and to do everything in my power to avoid if possible the effusion of human blood. I shall have great pleasure in suspending my attack on the pirates on Navy Island, and will cheerfully consent on the part of Her Majesty's Government that any arms or property they may have stolen from your Government or from your citizens, may be withdrawn by you from the Island, for the purpose of being immediately restored to their rightful owners.

Relying upon receiving from you the earliest possible notice of the result of your laudable exertions, and trusting that the same good feeling which has determined your Government to deprive these people of the arms of the United States, which you acknowledge they have clandestinely possessed themselves of, will induce you to prevent them from receiving from your shores any further assistance or supplies.

I have the honor to remain, Sir.

With the highest consideration,

Your obedient humble servant,

ALLAN N. McNAB,

Col. Com'g Her Majesty's Forces on the
Niagara Frontier.

To Commissary Gen. Henry Arcularius,
Esq., &c., &c.

On the 17th of December, 1837, Governor Marcy, of New York, issued a proclamation calling upon all good citizens to abstain from assisting the rebels. On January 2, 1838, he sent a message to the Legislature, stating that although the

Federal Government had care of the foreign relations, he would nevertheless see that the frontiers were protected.

On December 28, 1837, Governor Johnson, of Vermont, issued the following proclamation:

"It has been represented to me that in some few instances arms have been furnished, and hostile forces organized within this State. No one can be ignorant of the consequences of such a state of things if allowed. Such forces may be repelled, and our territory be made the theatre of active warfare. This is not to be tolerated for a moment, and every good citizen will appreciate the importance of rebuking all such acts as may tend to produce it.

That comity which binds nations to each other condemns all interference in their intestine broils, and the laws of Congress are explicit in their denunciation, subjecting those who improperly interfere to heavy penalties and imprisonment. Under these circumstances and with these feelings, I have thought it my duty to issue THIS MY PROCLAMATION, cautioning my fellow citizens against all acts that may

subject them to penalties, or in any way compromit the Government. Our first duty is to our Government, and the greatest benefit we can confer on the world is by giving them a perfect example in the action of that Government. With other nations our conduct should be regulated by the principles of an enlarged and enlightened philanthropy.

In war we may treat them as enemies, but in peace they are to be regarded as friends. In the present posture of affairs our duty is manifest—that of a strict neutrality—neither lending such aid to either as would be inconsistent with that character, nor denying the rights of hospitality to either so long as they are within our borders, and maintain the character of quiet and peaceable citizens."

Governor Stevens T. Mason, of Michigan, also issued the following proclamation:

"Now, therefore, in compliance with the request of the President of the United States, and in view of the popular commotion now existing in the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, I do hereby

caution and enjoin upon all good citizens, of this State, and all other persons whomsoever resident or being within our borders, to abstain and desist from the commission of any act which may in the least degree violate the laws of the United States or disturb the peace and amity now existing between the people of this Union and the Government of Great Britain. And I do, by this proclamation, further enjoin upon all officers of this State, to aid in the faithful enforcement of the laws of the United States and in the arrest of all persons who may attempt their infringement. Dated 28th Dec., 1837."

In the Legislature of Michigan the following resolution was offered by Representative Buel:—

"Resolved, That the recent outrage committed by British subjects in the destruction of the American steamer Caroline, and the massacre of a portion of its crew within American waters and near American shore, is an indignity to our common country which calls loudly for reparation."

This resolution was tabled by a vote of 23 to 18. A similar fate met resolutions

condemning the arrest of Thos. J. Sutherland on Michigan soil by British officers.

On January 6, the Mayor of Detroit called a public meeting, at which resolutions favoring the observance of neutrality, were adopted.

It has been seen that the action of the State authorities had been guided by the National Government. As a matter of fact, as early as December 7, 1837, the Secretary of State had written to the Governors of Vermont, New York and Michigan, asking them to enforce neutrality. Instructions of the same nature had been sent to the District Attorneys and Marshalls. On the 20th of December, 1838, Daniel Kellogg, Attorney for the District of Rockingham, Vermont, received special instructions to prosecute all those who might furnish arms to the fugitives of the battle of St. Charles.

At the same time the Secretary of State wrote to the United States District Attorney, at Detroit, as follows: -

"It is the fixed determination of the President faithfully to discharge, so far as his power extends, all the obligations of this Government, and that obligation especially which requires that we shall abstain, under every temptation, from intervening with the domestic disputes of other nations. You are therefore earnestly enjoined to be attentive to all movements of a hostile character contemplated or attempted within your district, and to prosecute, without discrimination, all violators of those laws of the United States which have been enacted to preserve peace with foreign powers, and to fulfil the obligations of our treaties with them."

On the 5th of January, 1838, the President, Van Buren, himself issued a proclamation in which he said:—

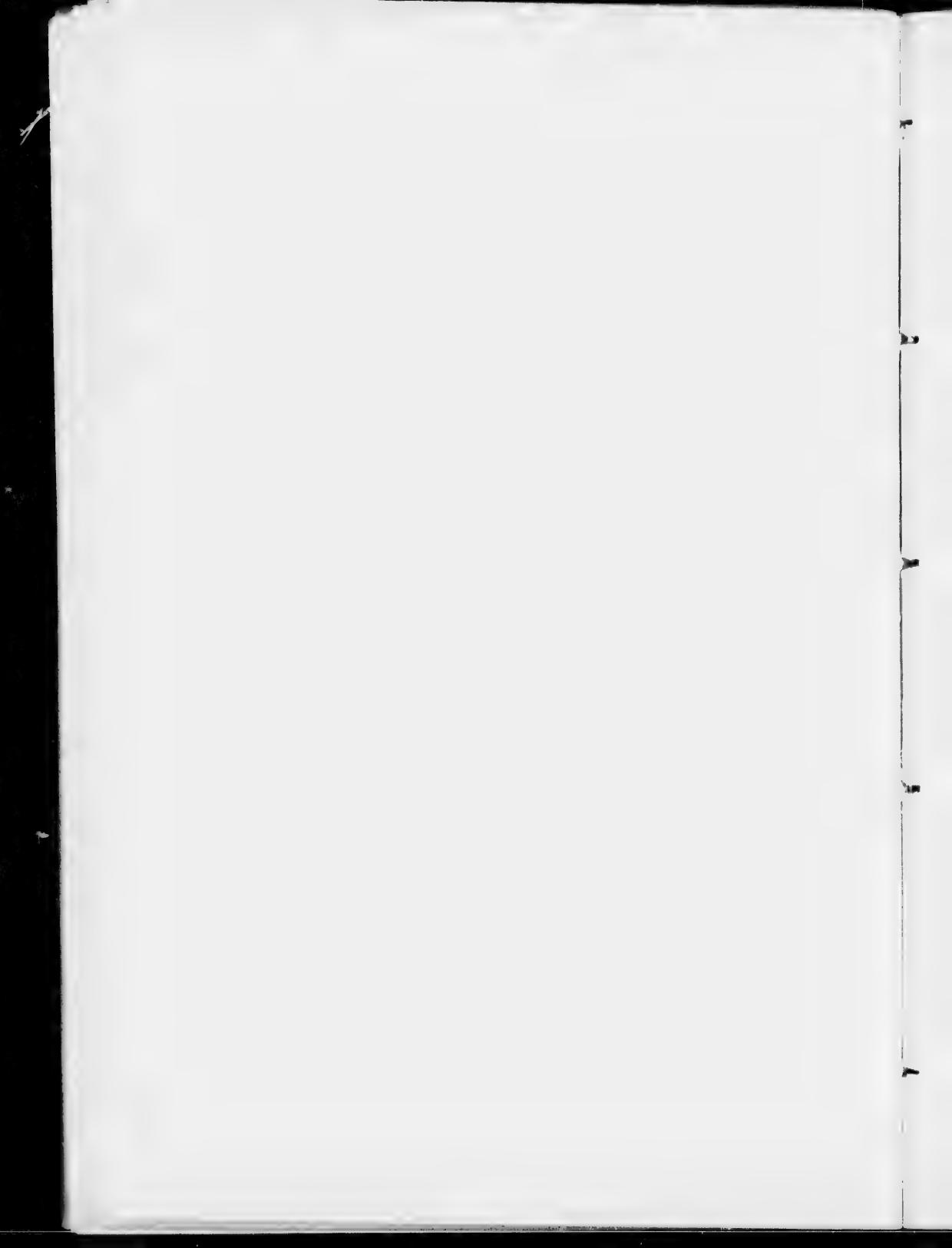
"I most earnestly exhort all citizens of the United States who have thus violated their duties, to return peaceably to their respective homes, and I hereby warn them, that any persons who shall compromise the neutrality of this Government by interfering in an unlawful manner with the affairs of the neighboring Provinces, will render themselves liable to arrest and punishment."

ment, under the laws of the United States, which will be rigidly enforced, and also that they will receive no aid or countenance from their Government, into whatever difficulties they may be thrown by the violation of the laws of their country and of the territory of a neighboring and friendly nation."

Van Buren, moreover, sent a message to Congress on January 5, asking for power to effectually restrain all persons within the United States jurisdiction from violating international law. That brought on a discussion in the Senate.

Henry Clay, as reported in the newspapers of the day, said that no spectacle, in his opinion, could be more unworthy a free people professing to act and to abide by their own constitution and laws, than that of seeing the nation at peace with a foreign power, and the people taking part in hostilities against the same power. If the laws of the country are not sufficient to prevent the exhibition of such a spectacle, it becomes the duty of Congress to pass laws which may be fully adequate to prevent a state of things so much to be deplored.





Calhoun said he had felt great solicitude on this subject, and was very anxious that the United States should abstain most rigidly from any interference in this war. He hoped the laws to prevent any such interference would be rigidly enforced. Let power, if necessary, be given to the executive. If he has not enough to enable him to put down this interference, let him be made stronger. Of all calamities which could befall this country, he might say, rather, which could befall the civilized world, a war with Great Britain at this time would be the most to be deplored.

W. Norvell, from Michigan, concurred in these remarks.

Mr. Davis thought the executive had not been prompt nor rigid enough. He was glad the Executive had waked up, and he hoped the subject would meet with the attention it deserved.

Senator Benton also concurred in these views.

In the House of Representatives the subject came up on the 8th of January. News of the burning of the Caroline had been received, and Congress was informed that on the 5th of January Secretary of State had written to the British Minister, Fox, expressing the hope "that through his instrumentality an early explanation might be obtained from the authorities of Upper Canada of all the circumstances of the transaction, and that by your advice to those authorities such decisive precautions may be used as will render the perpetration of similar acts hereafter impossible."

Congressman Thompson, of South Carolina, thought that the letter was too tame. "A murder," he said, "had been committed with every feature that could possibly characterize it as an atrocious and brutal assassination by British soldiers upon unarmed and unoffending American citizens within American territory. They had been murdered in their sleep, and this Government would cease to be considered worthy of the sympathy of other nations if such acts should be passed over without a prompt demand for redress. He contended that the murderers should have at once been demanded by our government, and held amenable to our laws. He, too, feared war, but honor was paramount.

M. Cambrelenz thought the act of the British atrocious and reprehensible, but deemed the debate at present was premature.

The celebrated Haynes approved the letter.

Congressman Gray, of New York caused a letter to be read to show that the British had been exasperated by the Americans.

Congressman Filmore, later president, doubted the latter fact. He said that a letter dated the 9th of December, from Allan McNab, had given the assurance that no attack was contemplated, yet a gross outrage had been committed and marauders welcomed at his camp. This was aggravating.

Mr. Gray said he did not wish to excuse the British, but was averse at this time to precipitate war with England.

Mr. Tillinghurst said that he hoped there would be no war. He hoped that England would censure and punish murderers. But meantime excited citizens must not be left to the sway of their unchecked impulses. There should be sufficient force to prevent irregularities.

Mr. Bronson said that there seemed a great mind to make war on the Admini-

stration as on England. He said that there might perhaps be found circumstances showing provocation. He disclaimed any intention of justifying the outrages, but thought best to suggest that there might be some palliative circumstances which were not yet all known. He was for a calm and dispassionate enquiry.

Mr. Rhett, South Carolina, said: We have none to blame but ourselves. He recalled sympathy and aid given to the rebels. We were bound to control our citizens, and were responsible for their conduct. He would know the facts before pronouncing on this transaction. If the Caroline had carried supplies to Navy Island he would not say that the British had no right to sink her. At all events it was a gallant enterprise, and if he had been in the situation of Col. McNabb, and had reason to believe that the boat was engaged in such a proceeding, he believed he should have done the same, and so, he suspected, would any other man of any intrepidity. But we wrought ourselves up for imaginary wrongs: let us look at the matter fairly and mark with whom the aggression lies.

Mr. McNeely was in favor of moderation. No great principle was at stake. He

did not wish to see war brought by men without authority.

Mr. Thompson replied. He had been astonished to hear it said that no principle was at stake. Great God ! Were they to be told on that floor that American citizens within the lines of American jurisdiction might be murdered in their sleep by foreign mercenaries, and yet no principle involved. If the alleged outrages had actually been perpetrated, then we had but one alternative—redress or war. The conduct of our people could furnish no excuse. He regretted the conduct on the frontier. It was undoubtedly criminal. But what difference between their conduct and that of the British !

Mr. Wise hoped discussion would stop. It was not timely. He could not hold Great Britain responsible. He moved the previous question, which carried, and the message of the President was referred to a committee.

On the 15th of January Senator Buchanan, afterwards President, presented a bill in the Senate authorizing the confiscation of such vessels as were supposed to be about to cross the line to help in

surgents, together with arms and ammunitions of war, which might be found on board; also the confiscation of arms and munitions supposed to be destined for the same purpose.

He remarked that he had read with regret the letter of Col. McNab acknowledging that the Caroline had been destroyed by his order. American territory and American jurisdiction had been violated in the capture of the Caroline, and national honor required that they should not submit to this injury without ample redress. However, he did not wish to enter into any agreement.

The bill passed the Senate and the House on the 10th of March.

On the 8th of March the question of the Caroline outrage had been buried in the House by Congressman Filmore, who simply expressed the hope that the British would disavow this act and offer proper satisfaction.

The measures of the administration met with almost universal approval and several newspapers even claimed that it did not go far enough.

In its issue of the 12th of January, 1838 the Detroit Free Press blamed the authorities for their inactivity. That same day several sympathizers were arrested in Detroit. On the 16th of January, the Free Press said:

"We cannot resist the conviction that the great body of the inhabitants of Canada, particularly in the upper province are now—as they were during the last war and the revolution—subservient attached to the monarchical principles of the British crown. We are convinced that the inhabitants are not prepared morally or physically, to make the exertions or sacrifices necessary to achieve and maintain their independence."

The Buffalo Courier of January 24, 1838, said:

"The banditti have dispersed and it is of no consequence what has become of them provided they do not again attempt to disturb the peace of the Union."

As late as February 17, 1838, the National Intelligencer, at first sympathetic to the rebels, said:

"It is high time that it should be ascertained whether we have a government or not or whether the law of nations is to be set at defiance and the laws of this land trampled upon with impunity by hordes of desperate and unprincipled adventurers, whether in pursuit of plunder recknow, at the expense of the national character for common honesty and of the peace of their country. If these things are tolerated, if the whole power of the government is not roused to action if necessary, to put a stop to them, the United States will become a by-word among the nations for bad faith, and for want of moral power, or of physical inability to exert it."

As a matter of fact the **rebel sympathizers** had maintained a **secret organization** as the following letter shows:

L. V. Bierce, Akron, Ohio.

"Dear General,--I have received your order dated at Detroit, Dec. 8th, and in answer will say that it is impossible for me to go west for at least three weeks.

In the meantime I wish you would give me an account of what transpired while you was above, also the plans and prospects of future operations, that I may act understandingly in the matter. There is one thing that I will again suggest, which is that all the available patriotic force east of Clev land be immediately ordered west, that we may make one united effort to sustain ourselves after gaining the enemy's territory. We must have a rallying point.

The idea of attack at different points with a force wholly inadequate, has, and will continue to be as long as practised, the destruction of all our hopes."

SE. D. BRADLEY

Dec. 16th, 1838.

We read in the Indianapolis Journal of December 19, 1838:—

"The Journeymen Printers of this place have formed themselves into a company of volunteers, under the command of Capt. S. B. Gentry, and will go to assist Patriots to-morrow."

A Secret Order of Hunters was also in existence, and rumor had it that 50,000 men were ready to invade Canada. This led to the publication of the following proclamation, after which the Patriot agitation ceased to attract attention.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas it has come to the knowledge of the Government of the United States that sundry secret lodges, clubs or associations exist on the northern frontier, that the members of these lodges are bound together by secret oaths; that they have collected firearms and other military materials and secreted them in sundry places; and that it is their purpose to violate the laws of their country, by making military and lawless incursions, when opportunity shall offer, into the territory of a power

with which the United States are at peace; and whereas it is known that travelling agitators, from both sides of the line, visit these lodges and harangue the members in secret meeting, stimulating them to illegal acts; and whereas the same persons are known to levy contributions on the ignorant and credulous for their own benefit, thus supporting and enriching themselves by the basest means; and whereas the unlawful intentions of the members of these have already been manifested in an attempt to destroy the lives and property of the inhabitants of Chippewa in Canada and the public property of the British Government there belonging; now, therefore, I, John Tyler, President of the United States, do issue this my proclamation admonishing all such evil-minded persons of the condign punishment which is certain to overtake them; assuring them that the laws of the United States will be rigorously executed against their illegal acts; and that if in any such lawless incursions into Canada they fall into the hands of the British they fall into the hands of the British authorities they will not be reclaimed as American citizens, nor any interference made by this Government on their behalf. And I exhort all well-meaning but deluded persons who may have joined these lodges immediately to abandon them, and to have

nothing more to do with their secret meetings or unlawful oaths, as they would avoid serious consequences to themselves. And I expect the intelligent and well-disposed members of the community to frown on all these unlawful institutions and illegal proceedings, and to assist the Government in maintaining the peace of the country against the mischievous consequences of the acts of these violators of the law.

Given under my hand, at the city of Washington, the twenty-fifth day of September, A.D. 1841, and of the independence of the United States, the sixty-sixth.

JOHN TYLER.

By the President.

DANIEL WEBSTER, Secretary of State.



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